

Leimert Park Village

Thursday, August 6 and Friday, August 7, 2015



Urban Land **Los Angeles**
Institute

Technical Assistance Panel

The mission of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI Advisory Services

- ULI Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) provide strategic advice to sponsors on complex land use and real estate development issues.
- Links public agencies and nonprofit organizations to the knowledge and experience of ULI and its membership.
- Established in 1947.



Technical Assistance Panel

TAP Panelists

- Panel members are volunteers. They are not compensated for their time.
- Panel members are experts in real estate development, land use planning and design, real estate financing, and economic development.



Technical Assistance Panel

Stakeholder Interviews

Thank You!

- Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Supervisor, Second District
- Herb J. Wesson, Los Angeles City Council President and 10th District Councilmember
- Kelli Bernard
- Brian Bowers
- James V. Burks
- Ben Caldwell
- Alan DiCastro
- Sherri Franklin
- James Fugate
- Samuel Hughes
- Carl Morgan
- Heather Presha
- Johnnie Raines
- Nick Saponara
- Sunnie Sashijima
- Brenda Shockley
- Lee Walker
- Reginald Woolfolk
- Jackie DuPont Walker
- Roland Wiley



TAP panelists

Chair

- **Michael Banner**, Los Angeles LDC

Panel

- **Denise Bickerstaff**, County of San Bernardino EDA
- **Leigh Christy**, Perkins+Will
- **Andrew Fogg**, Cox, Castle & Nicholson
- **Gunnar Hand**, SOM
- **Malcolm Johnson**, JP Morgan
- **Walter Maynard**, TELACU
- **Sherry Rudnak**, BAE Urban Economics
- **Laurie Stone**, University of Southern California

Key Questions

MARKET

- What is the strongest retail market niche for the Leimert Park Village in light of existing, approved and planned commercial developments in the area, such as the Crenshaw Mall, Marlton Square, District Square and University Village.
- What is the most effective marketing strategy for the Village? Should the marketing strategy focus on the cultural and historic assets of the Village? Should the Village be promoted as a regional, national and international destination, or stay focused on the local market and opportunities?

DEVELOPMENT

- What is the highest and best use for the City-owned parking lots that is consistent with the community's vision for the Village?
 - Identify the types of developments the community should encourage, including: land use, density, and building height.
 - Identify cost effective solutions for providing replacement parking once the parking lots are developed.
- How can the Village be positioned/planned as a pedestrian-oriented district? What are the near term and long term opportunities for improving pedestrian linkages with the surrounding neighborhoods and other nearby existing and planned retail centers?

IMPLEMENTATION

- What financing options are available, both public and private, to achieve early results consistent with the near-term action steps recommended by the Panel? Are funding mechanisms available that can facilitate local community ownership that further the goal of preserving cultural and historic resources?
- What are the near-term steps for attracting new investment to the Village that have the highest probability of success and that begin the process of achieving the shared art, cultural and entertainment vision for the Village?



Observations

Strengths

- Affluence of the neighborhood
- African American cultural enclave
- Transit corridor
- Engaged residents
- Strong political leadership
- Good bones and scale
- Historic architecture
- Vision Theater
- Track record of cultural events
- Local, national, international reputation
- Large contiguous parcels under public control
- Adjacent open and gathering space



Weaknesses

- Retail storefronts used for storage
- Inactive streetscapes
- Perception of safety
- Lack of connection with surrounding neighborhoods – psychological barrier
- Lack of compelling competitive retail
- Irregular business hours
- Lack of code enforcement
- Restrictive Specific Plan
- Unwelcoming park atmosphere
- BID size and scope
- Perceived resistance to change



Opportunities

- Leverage interest in community ownership
- Attract compelling destination anchor retail
- Maximize use of open space
- Fulfill vision for theater as cultural hub
- Activate public realm through streetscape improvements
- Integrate art into public spaces
- Increase public programs
- Increase BID capacity and engagement
- Promote cultural assets through integrated branding campaign
- Utilize city parcels to increase daytime population
- Improve pedestrian experience



Threats

- Inaction worsens park's unwelcoming environment
- Lack of engagement reinforces hostility towards change
- Decline of existing cultural assets
- Unreal expectations for impact of Metro
- Regulatory uncertainty
- Gentrification perception





Market

Market Demographics

Leimert Park (2013 data)

Population 12,694

Households 5,353

Median HH Income \$42,469

% African American 75.4%

% Hispanic 17.1%

Median Home Prices (2015)

Single-Family \$640,000

Condo \$355,000

Sources: ACS; Corelogic.com; BAE, 2015.

Greater Los Angeles (5-mile radius)

Population 601,686

Households 181,613

Median HH Income \$48,466

% African American 32.8%

% Hispanic 33.1%

Median Home Prices (2015)

Single-Family \$525,000

Condo \$437,000

Sources: Esri; Citydata.com; Primestor, 2015.

Market Niche: Community-Oriented Retail

Community Oriented Retail

Focus on compelling day-time anchors to draw users, and support uses to keep them here

- Potential Day-Time Anchors
 - Natural Foods Market/Grocery
 - Activity-based uses (e.g., Mommy and Me; Early-Childhood Music Education; Senior Activities)
- Night time anchor: Vision Theater and other venues
- Supportive Uses
 - Food Hall/Restaurants/Cafes

Requirements

- Absorb existing vacancies and reclaim retail spaces from incompatible uses (52,800 square feet)
- Address safety concerns
- Joint marketing campaign

Marketing Strategy: All of the Above

- **Cultural and Historic Assets**
 - Vision Theater as an anchor
 - World Stage and Kaos
- **Local Destination**
 - Restaurants and activities to attract local residents on a daily basis
 - Events and supportive uses provide regional attraction
 - Include uses that provide a critical mass to make regular business hours economically viable
- **National and International Destination**
 - Partner with other Historic African American destinations and touring companies
 - Continue partnering with international cities



Development

Design Principles

1. Connectivity
2. Public Realm
3. Built Form
4. Programming



Design Principles

Connectivity

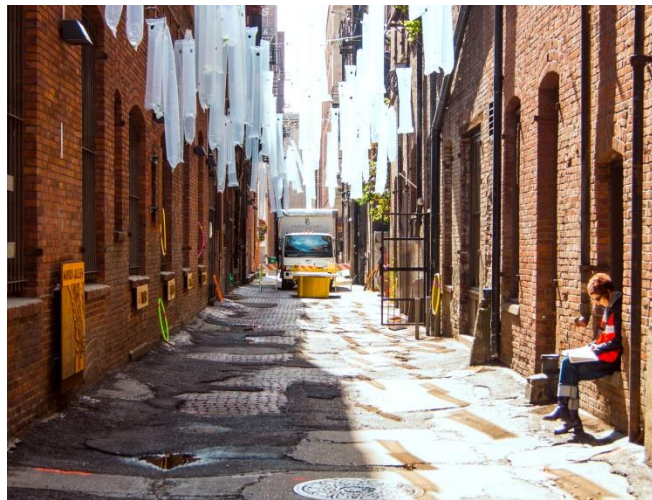
- Celebrate Leimert Park and Degnan as focal axis



Design Principles

Public Realm

- Enhance sense of place through streetscape and public art



Design Principles

Built Form

- Consider strategic development
- Improve existing assets



Design Principles

Programming

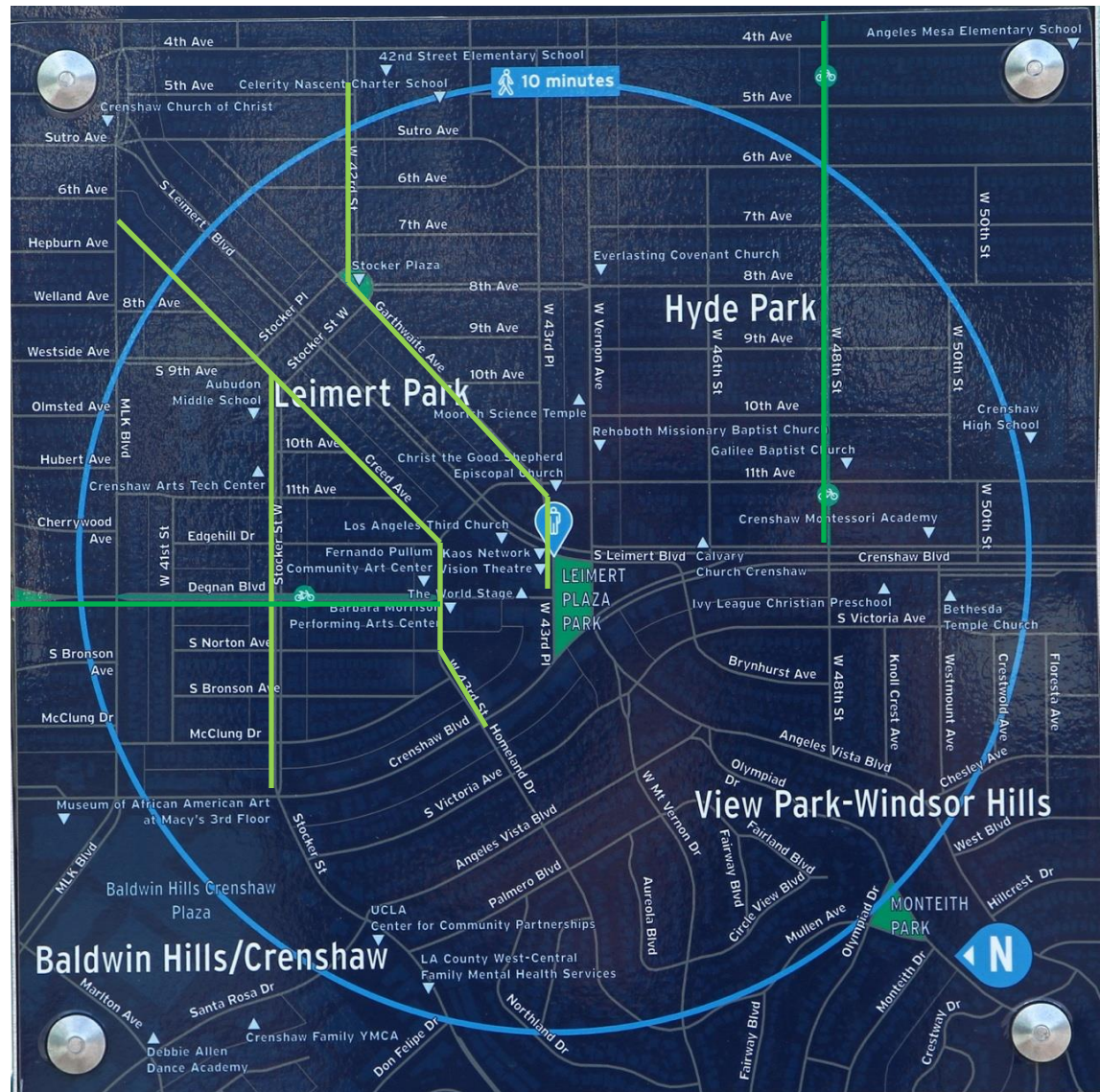
- Embrace local arts and culture as regional draw



Connectivity

Neighborhood

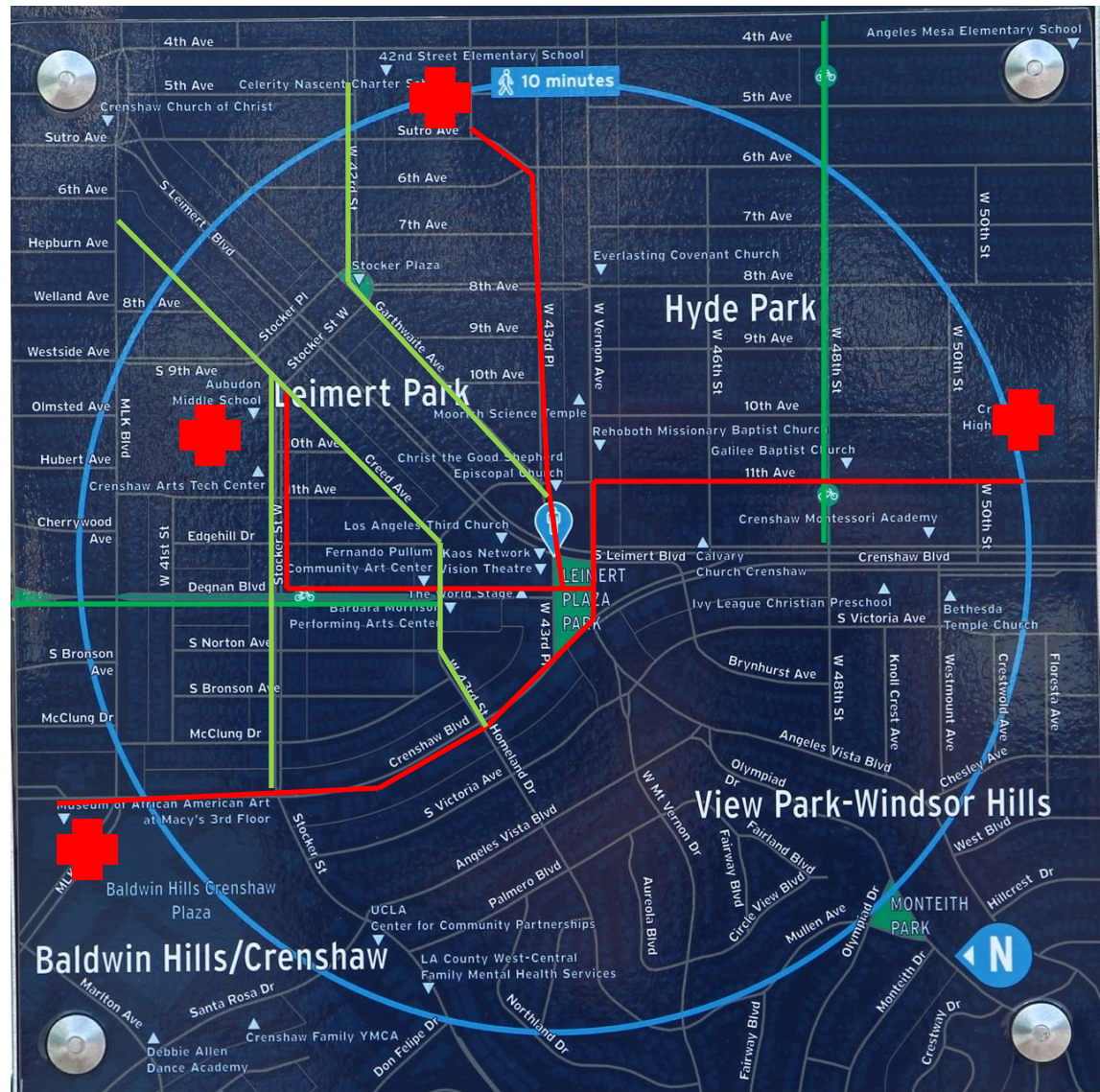
- 10-minute walking radius
- Bike Lanes



Connectivity

Neighborhood

- 10-minute walking radius
- Bike Lanes



Implementation

Pedestrian Improvements

- Active Alleyways
- Streetscape Improvements
- Paseos
- Bikeshare
- Lighting



Implementation

Green Streets

- Soil Composition
- Water Infiltration
- Historical stream bed
- Tree canopy
- Edible Parkways



Implementation

Public Art

- Curated Storefronts
- Murals
- Streetscape Elements
- Bus Shelters
- Art Alleys
- Art Festivals



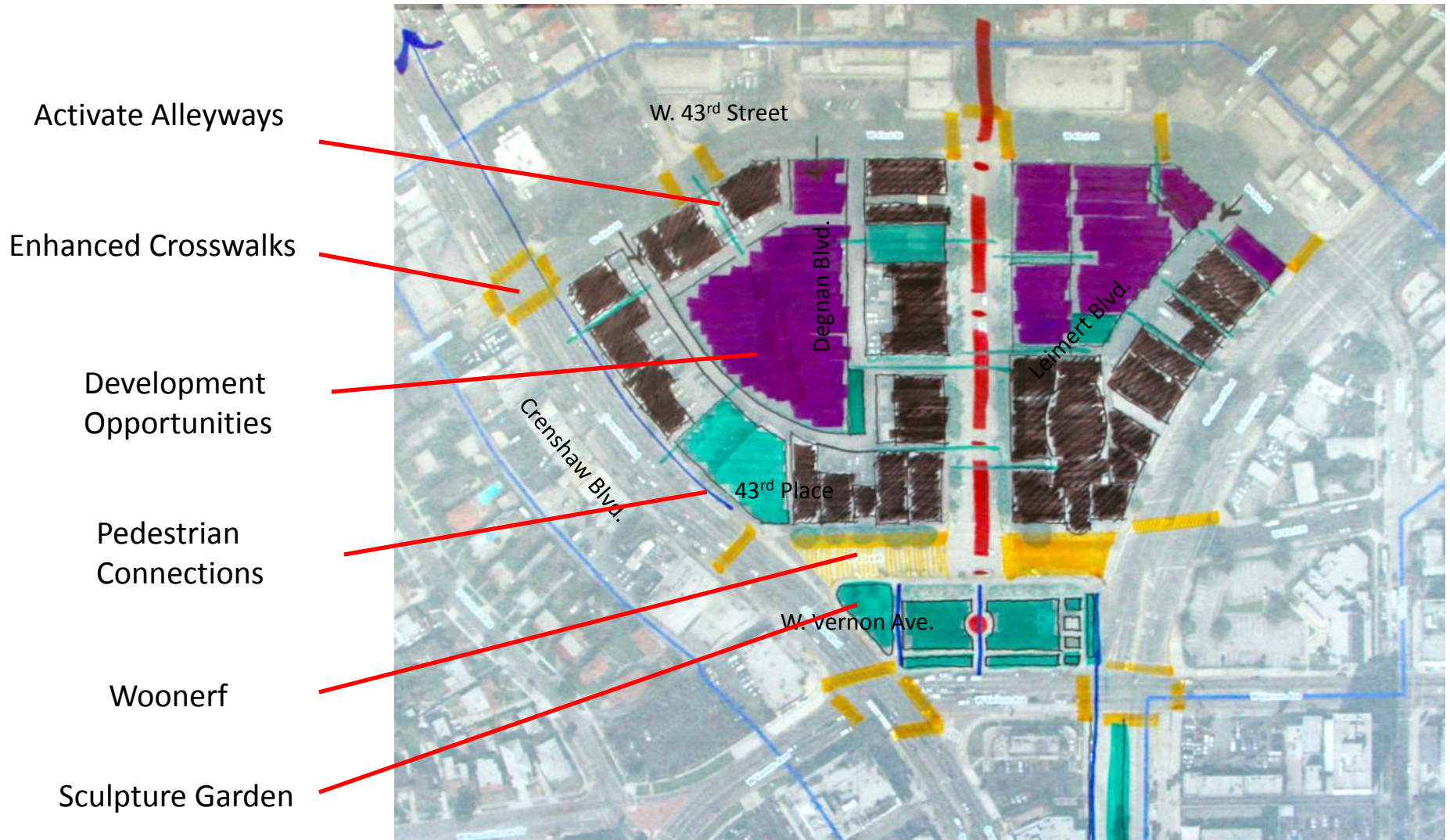
Implementation

Tactical Urbanism

- Better Block
- Parking Day
- Wayfinding
- Guerilla Gardening



Development Strategies



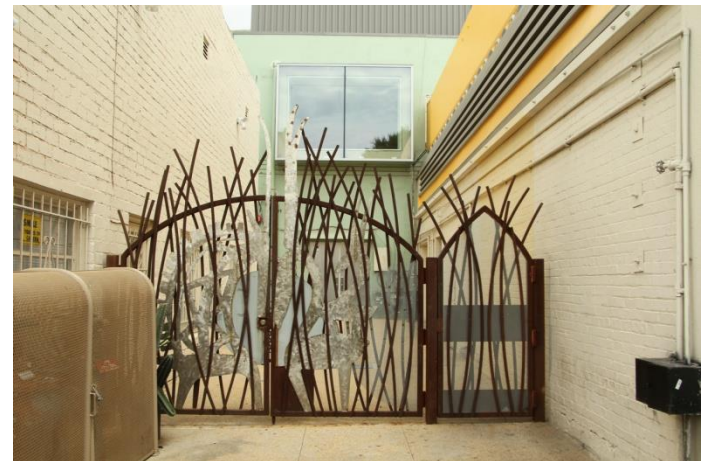
Development Strategies

- Clean up of Leimert Park
- Complete renovation of the Vision Theatre
- Use Vision Theatre as anchor for Cultural Center district along Degnan
 - New 2-story Cultural Incubator with rooftop amenity(ies)
 - Wrap new 2-story parking structure with rooftop solar array
 - Increase density allowances on this site
- Metro Joint-Development:
 - Artists-in-residence/TOD Live/Work Housing
 - Include new 2-story parking structure with rooftop solar array
 - Increase height limit to 60' on this site



Development Strategies – Design

- Design a welcoming southern gateway along Vernon at Leimert Park
- Brand Village crosswalks, similar to symbols for the People Street
- Increased lighting to Leimert Park and Walkways
- Add bulb-outs along the northern edge of 43rd Place
- Expand presence of public art as part of streetscape improvements
- Create sculpture pocket parks
- Connect Village to neighboring assets via multi-modal improvements



Development Strategies – Community Activation

- Brand Village crosswalks, similar to symbols for the People Street
- Encourage private businesses to curate their storefront displays
- Activate pedestrian alleyways and paseos
- Open storefronts to the sidewalk, especially on 43rd Place
- Develop distinctive Village landscape palette – sculptural, colorful, sustainable





Implementation

Organization and Leadership

- What entity would take the lead?
- Key responsibilities
 - Organize and lead the community
 - Coordinate various stakeholder groups
 - Community
 - Property owners
 - City/Cultural Affairs
 - Marketing/Branding – coordinate with BID
- Key characteristics:
 - Representatives from key community groups and stakeholders
 - Residents, property owners, business owners, churches, cultural groups
 - Political support
 - Defined expectations and responsibilities
 - Accountability

Financing Options

Develop and maintain database or resource model that lists existing and potential funding sources that is readily available to property owners, business operators and others to encourage development activity in the Village.

1. Existing BID
2. New Market Tax Credits
3. Historic Tax Credits
4. Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District
5. Crowdfunding
6. Major philanthropy
7. Other funding sources to potentially be explored

Phasing and Timing – Phase 1: Short-term

- Park
 - Clean up park
 - Remove incompatible uses
 - Activate the park for community users – residents, village patrons, and future transit users – by providing regular programming and other activities
 - Improve lighting
 - Consider allocating portion of BID funds to enhanced security
- Vision Theater:
 - Complete planned renovations
 - Continue to program space
 - Incorporate events and rental use of theater space
 - Cultivate art program as a draw to the theater
 - Encourage variety of daytime uses in the theater
 - Explore opportunities to partner with local arts icons

Phasing and Timing – Phase 1: Short-term

- Deganan:
 - Focus on development of Deganan as primary commercial arterial in village
 - Encourage activation of storefronts along street
 - Review conformity of uses within existing storefronts to ensure zoning compatibility
 - Prioritize completion of sidewalk and pedestrian improvements to enhance street feel
- Planning of City Parcels:
 - Develop options for future use of community parcels
 - Identify potential development partners to assist in feasible planning

Phasing and Timing – Phase 2: Mid-term and Beyond

- Consider adoption of new Leimert Village Specific Plan or modifying existing Specific Plan to create new focused zone in Leimert Village
 - Focus on historical cultural uses and activities
 - Potential to modify height district limitations on selected parcels while preserving the scale of uses along Degnan
 - Potential to modify parking requirements, particularly in proximity to transit stop
 - Opportunity to encourage mix of uses, including streamlined permitting for designated uses
- Development of one or both of city-owned parcels
- Possible vacation of 43rd Place and creation of pedestrian plaza between Crenshaw and Leimert
 - Encourage development of visitor serving uses that bridge area between storefronts and park – outdoor dining
- Consider vacation of Degnan to continue pedestrian experience from park through to 43rd Street.



Questions?

Thank You!

- Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Supervisor, Second District
- Herb J. Wesson, Los Angeles City Council President and 10th District Councilmember
- Kelli Bernard
- Brian Bowers
- James V. Burks
- Ben Caldwell
- Alan DiCastro
- Sherri Franklin
- James Fugate
- Samuel Hughes
- Carl Morgan
- Heather Presha
- Johnnie Raines
- Nick Saponara
- Sunnie Sashijima
- Brenda Shockley
- Lee Walker
- Reginald Woolfolk
- Jackie DuPont Walker
- Roland Wiley

